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ABSTRACT

The development of nonschool education programs, aimed at nontraditional populations such as the aged, the physically challenged, and the unemployed, has implications for the social and cultural foundations of education. First, a new clientele--namely, nonschool educators--will emerge for educational foundations. Second, nonschool educational programs will become a new frontier in the reconstruction of educational theory. A significant and growing sector of the developing nonschool educational community is employment and training. Employment and training has become a career field, complete with professional services like continuing education, associations, and publications. The career field of employment and training needs educational foundations to assure that the training programs' effect on society will be a democratic one and to produce more effective learning in these programs. Incorporating liberal learning into the programs is the key to securing these results. Foundations, too, are benefited by employment and training, when its scholars work cooperatively with employment trainers and thus expand foundations' relevance beyond schools. Employment and training focuses on three elements: work-based subject matter, alternative educational settings, and innovative procedures to meet individual needs. These elements are steps in the reconstruction of education in general, and they give credence to the concept of a more multifaceted, integrated education system. (Contains 19 references.) (JDD)

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NONSCHOOL EDUCATION: A NEW CLIENTELE AND FRONTIER FOR SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS

ED 379 249

D. Malcolm Leith, Ph.D.

The reach of education is broadening, and this portends change for social foundations. Educational programs aimed at nontraditional populations and offered in nontraditional settings are increasing. This is due in large part to a growing awareness of the desirability of more fully serving educational needs not addressed by the traditional school system. These are needs, for example, of the physically challenged and the aged. Another prime focus of nonschool programs is the chronically unemployed and underemployed, and it is the interface of foundations with employment and training for this population which this paper will examine.

For educational foundations, the implications of all these nonschool education programs are twofold. First: a new clientele -- namely, nonschool educators -- will emerge for educational foundations. Second: nonschool educational programs will become a new frontier in the reconstruction of educational theory.

There are already signs of this new clientele and frontier within the foundations field. In the Fall 1993 issue of Educational Foundations[1], Averil McClelland and Normand Bernier recount how their graduate classes in cultural foundations of education usually include more students pursuing careers in nonschool settings than in schools. They argue that the historical views of foundations focus too narrowly on schools, the

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dominant culture, and school practitioners. Not enough attention, they say, is given to what is actually happening in education today in the larger society outside the schools. They propose a revised definition of educational foundations, and revised purposes, content, and processes for foundations. These revisions would take greater account of nonschool settings and practices and would be formulated with the input of nonschool educators.

The socialization of nonschool educators into the larger educational community should be an important purpose of foundations, McClelland and Bernier feel. Nonschool educators are part of an educational community that, in their words, "already extends in fragmented form throughout a variety of agencies of society."[2]

Employment and training is a significant and growing sector of that larger educational community. This paper will look first at employment and training as a distinct career field.[3] Next, it will discuss that field's need for educational foundations. Finally, it will address educational foundations' need to encompass employment and training in its study.

I. Employment and Training is a Career Field

During the past 30 years, legislation has led to so many federal employment and training programs[4] that a bill is now pending to consolidate some of them. Yet new training legislation continues to be enacted: for example, the May 1994 School-to-Work Opportunity Act, which

includes training at nonschool sites and engagement of out-of-school youth. The states have been no less supportive of employment and training. In 1993, for example, 40 states authorized $339 million for customized worker training.[5] And the economic and social developments, both national and global, that have spurred this growth in employment and training show no signs of abating.

It's not surprising, then, that employment and training has become a career field, complete with professional services like continuing education, associations, and publications. Based on my nine years' experience in this field, I see it as having four distinct professions. Three of these are professions which, when school-based, are already served by educational foundations: teaching, counseling, administration. The fourth is a new profession called job development. An overview of these four professions will be followed by a brief look at professional services in the field.

Teaching opportunities in employment and training have become more diverse over the years, and a higher level of teaching skill is being demanded. The diversity has resulted in part from the growing recognition that the information society demands improved literacy skills. Consequently, teaching opportunities in the field now include not only instruction in job skills, but also instruction in various forms of literacy and general education. This need to integrate basic education with employment and training has fueled, in turn, the demand for a higher level of teaching skill. The practitioner must now have competence in the alternative settings through which learning can take place, and in the

application of alternative methodologies -- such as, individualized learning -- in employment and training program structures and technologies.[6]

In addition to more skilled teaching, more comprehensive counseling services are also being demanded. This follows from a recognition of the degree of challenges participants face in their personal lives and social environments. Counseling has thus evolved from an as-needed service into a case management concept which envisions a long-term, multi-service approach to clients.

The new profession of job development has arisen because employment, not education per se, is the central goal of the training programs as now legislated. Job development requires a sophisticated understanding of the interrelation among overall workplace demands, specific employer needs, and training and learning processes. In on-the-job training programs, for example, the job developer must not only search out employment opportunities for clients, he or she must also convince the potential employer of the benefits of on-the-job training, and must then actually design the worksite training.[7]

Administrative positions in the field are increasingly being sought through nationwide searches. These positions range from project directors of individual programs to managers of countywide and statewide systems. Salaries range from $30,000 to $55,000-plus. Typically such positions demand detailed knowledge of and extensive experience with employment and training legislation and regulations. Also required is skill in finance, computers, report and proposal writing, community development,

organization and contract management. At present such positions often require a bachelor's degree plus five years' experience in the employment and training field.[8]

Professional services are now being offered for those working in this field. These services include continuing professional education. Seminars, courses, and programs are available covering both technical and theoretical aspects of employment and training. Sponsors include institutions of higher education, state governments, the federal government, and private companies. Some colleges and universities offer for-credit courses for employment and training professionals. An example of a non-credit course offered by a private company is a recent, well-attended, three-day seminar in Washington, DC given by an Ohio-based training company. The subject was assessment in employment and training, and seminar topics ranged from computer hardware and software to new training and educational concepts. It is likely that continuing education offerings will increase as the field becomes more complex and as federal legislation[9] encourages professional standards. In fact, such standards are already being developed by the locally-based Private Industry Councils, which have statutory authority to do so.

Professional associations are also being established both locally and nationally. The National Association for Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP), founded in 1989, has a growing membership, with local chapters across the country, and a growing array of activities, including special interest groups, a national conference, and a monthly newsletter. Job placement is high on its agenda, and it focuses more

directly on those working with the disadvantaged than does the long--established American Society for Training and Development.

II. Employment and Training Needs Educational Foundations

The new career field of employment and training needs educational foundations for two main reasons: 1) to help assure that the effect of employment and training programs on society will be a democratic one; and 2) to produce more effective learning in these programs. Incorporating liberal learning into the programs is the key, I believe, to securing these results.

Although teaching methodologies in employment and training are becoming more innovative, as I have noted, nevertheless these methodologies are still used in the service of the traditional goal of employment and training: a job. This is an important goal, and one which current public policy emphasizes. But focusing narrowly on a job can mean participants will be tracked into a particular type of work without the skills needed to pursue continued job development. Educational foundations could help overcome this tendency. Through foundational insights, employment and training programs could help liberate their clients' capacity for critical thinking -- that is, the programs could help clients recognize their capacity to be innovative, to challenge the status quo, and to work for a more democratic economic and social system.

A primary means of developing critical thinking would be to integrate liberal learning into training structures and approaches. By liberal learning, I mean each individual's experience of discovery, choice, and

sharing. Such learning encourages a different kind of relationship among students, teachers, administrators. It is a democratic, rather than hierarchical, relationship. It is a relationship nurturing independence, responsibility, initiative, and cooperation rather than competition. These are essential political skills, and developing them in the training setting can strengthen the participants' confidence in applying these skills in institutional and social relationships of all kinds.

Further, it has been my experience, and that of others[10], that liberal learning is, in fact, the most effective learning in employment and training programs. That is, the democratic classroom and democratic program structure not only work against possible economic and social tracking, they also bring about greater rates of program completions and higher levels of competency than more traditional, less democratic approaches. Thus in fostering practitioners' understanding of liberal learning, educational foundations contributes to more effective employment and training programs.

Some questions which foundations scholars could elucidate for employment and training practitioners include: Where should classroom or training site authority lie? What is the nature and role of critical thought in the curriculum and program? Who has access to training? What are the long-term results of training? There is considerable foundations thought on these issues: e.g., the writings of John Dewey, Paulo Friere, Ira Shor, Roger Simon, and others.[11] Much of this work relates primarily to more traditional educational settings. Yet I feel it would benefit employment trainers. It helps to clarify the relation of learning

to social forces and cultural beliefs, thereby enabling employment trainers to understand the full implications of their practice. Further, as educational foundations specifically addresses employment and training, it can be hoped that foundations research would no longer need to be qualified as relating primarily to more traditional educational settings, but would reflect the broader educational application necessary for the reality of today's extended educational community and context.

Educational foundations can reach employment trainers through the classroom and off-campus. Employment and training professionals can be encouraged to enroll in university foundations classes. And foundations scholars can be encouraged to incorporate employment and training issues and cases into their classes and scholarship. Also, founadtions scholars can join employment and training professional associations and can establish links with local training programs, for example, through student internships.

III. Educational Foundations Needs Employment and Training

Foundations, too, is benefited when its scholars work cooperatively with employment trainers. Through this cooperation, foundations expands its relevance beyond schools to an important area of educational development outside of the schools. At the same time, it strengthens its traditional focus by gaining an added means for affecting education in general. That's because educational solutions which employment and training is developing for its clientele can help solve broader problems of general education. Three general education problems which employment

and training addresses are: 1) irrelevant subject matter contexts; 2) dysfunctional educational settings; and 3) failure to meet individual needs.

1) Employment and training is meeting the problem of irrelevant subject matter contexts. It is developing the concept of work as a nonschool context for general learning and critical thnking. While this context has not traditionally been emphasized in the schools, yet work is central to life and so carries great meaning. It can help define one's sense of identity, self-worth, and ability to survive. In President Clinton's words, "Work organizes life."[12] Thus the field of employment training, I believe, offers the potential for realizing John Dewey's ideal of achieving general education through the study of occupations.

Work as a context for learning is discussed by Arthur Wirth in Education and Work for the Year 2000.[13] Wirth sees the integration of general learning with vocational education -- as is, in fact, mandated in recent federal legislation -- as the key to transforming American education through the liberalizing of general education. He notes that contemporary cognitive scientists stress that effective learning requires a context meaningful to the learner, and that such contextual learning requires, in turn, learning strategies and approaches different from those commonly found in schools.[14] Wirth points to the Integrated Studies Program at MIT and Rindge School of Technical Arts in Cambridge, MA, as models.

Wirth's concern is the traditional school population. Yet I believe that the transformation he envisions can also be realized with the adult,

school dropout clientele of employment and training. Thus employment and training offers a way to extend liberal education to those the current schooling system does not reach. Signs of this development already exist. For example, a sample assignment in a comprehensive employment and training curriculum formulated by the Labor Department is to "discuss the pros and cons of the argument that Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice is a racist play and should be banned from the school curriculum."[15]

2) Employment and training is meeting the problem of dysfunctional educational settings, such as school classrooms removed from community life. It does so by providing alternative sites for education: community centers, storefronts, office buildings. Not only are such sites free of the negative associations with schools that the clientele may have (e.g., school as a place for failure or boredom), the alternative sites also demonstrate that learning is not an isolated, ritualized activity. Rather it is seen more as an accessible, living experience that can take place in settings in which clients are already comfortable. Because these sites are often more closely related to the work world, they also help demonstrate learning as related to clients' life goals. All these factors foster client involvement in learning and hence promote transformative learning.[16] This involvement in learning can also demonstrate the viability of alternative settings for general education and traditional school populations. Such sites offer greater responsiveness to personal and social circumstance and provide a resource with which to respond to social and economic change.

3) Employment and training is redressing the failure to meet

individual needs. It is pioneering successfully innovative procedures which focus closely on the individual. One such procedure is open-entry/open-exit enrollment systems. These systems are oriented towards specific objectives, as opposed to artificial norms, and provide self-paced instruction. Thus they break out of traditional time/age limits, thereby enabling students to achieve greater degrees of empowerment. Another procedure is the development of long-range individual plans and strategies. Nurturing a longer-range outlook helps promote the idea of lifelong learning, a key liberal education concept, among individuals who might not otherwise experience this message. It helps awaken in students a capacity and enthusiasm for continued learning.[17]

These three elements of employment and training -- work-based subject-matter, alternative educational settings, and innovative procedures to meet individual needs -- are steps in the reconstruction of education in general. While they have relevance to school reform, they also give credence to the concept of a more multi-faceted, integrated education system. They support, for example, the proposal of a national commission that communities establish locally-funded youth centers that would be designed to function as legitimate alternatives to high school.[18]

IV. Conclusion

Employment and training represents a new clientele and new frontier for educational foundations. If foundations scholars increasingly respond

to both the pioneering work occurring in this field and to the needs of the employment and training clientele, there will be a dual benefit. This new arena for foundations work would enable foundations to contribute to liberalizing employment and training. And it would promote receptivity in schools and the general public to educational reform.

Now especially is the time for foundations to address this new clientele and frontier. With the current emphasis on workforce development in policy and legislation, employment and training is an active and developing field. Foundations input at this stage can help assure that the development of employment and training will contribute to educational and social reform.

1. Averil E. McClelland and Normand R. Bernier, "A Rejoinder to Steve Tozer's 'Towards a New Consensus among Social Foundations Educators,'" Educational Foundations, Number 4, Fall 1993, pp. 57-63.

2. Ibid., 60.

3. The term employment and training, as this field is known, reflects its origins in both employment service and vocational training, and the recognition that education and employment are increasingly linked.

4. "The Federal Page," The Washington Post, January 8, 1993, p. A17, which indicates 125 such programs spread out over 14 federal agencies.

5.Daniel B. Wood, "State Training Programs; Old Idea Gets New Boost," The Christian Science Monitor, 1994.

6. See, for example, Lori Strumpf, "Program Designs to Increase Basic Academic Skills," and Benita Somerfield, "Optimal Programming," Literacy and the Marketplace, proceedings of conference organized by Wider Opportunities for Women, Washington, DC, published by The Rockefeller Foundation, 1989.

7. See, for example, William J. Rothwell and H.C. Kazanas, Improving On-the-Job Training (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994).

8. Based on my survey from August 1993 through August 1994 of "Job Bank" notices in Advantage, a monthly publication of the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (formerly Partnership for Training and Employment Careers).

9. Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 1994.

10. D. Malcolm Leith, "Criticial Pedagogy and Education Reform: Perspectives from a Nonschool General Education Program for the Chronically Unemployed/Underemployed," delivered at AESA Annual Meeting, 1990; and Lori Strumpf, op. cit.

11. John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916); Paulo Friere, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972); Ira Shor, Critical Teaching and Everyday Life (Boston: South End Press, 1980); Roger I. Simon, Don Dippo, and Arleen Schenke, Learning Work: A Critical Pedagogy of Work Education (New York: Bergin & Garvey, 1991).

12. President Bill Clinton, November, 1993, quoted in materials from the Employment and Training Advocacy Network of Montgomery County, MD, second annual professional development workshop, September 23, 1994.

13. Arthur G. Wirth, Education and Work for the Year 2000 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), pp. 154-184.

14. Wirth specifically mentions Lauren B. Resnick in connection with school-aged vocational training populations. Resnick's work has been cited in other studies as well. See, for example, Literacy and the Marketplace, op. cit. Other cognitive scientists whom I have found helpful in connection with nonschool learning are Sylvia Scribner and Howard Gardner.

15. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), Teaching the SCANS Competencies, US Department of Labor, 1993, p. 13.

16. See Leith, op. cit.; Simon, op. cit.; and Lori Strumpf and Fran Rothstein, Getting Started: A Discussion of Issues and Resources on Summer Enrichment for Youth, US Department of Labor, May, 1993.

17. See, for example, Leith, op. cit.

18. The Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages, the National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990, p. 71.